



Natural Resources Conservation Service
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900
Portland, OR 97232

November 13, 2008

OREGON BULLETIN NO. OR 360-2009-3

SUBJECT: PER-Absence and Leave-Hazardous Weather

Purpose. This memo transmits our policy and procedures for hazardous weather. The State Conservationist and Portland Center Directors have agreed to a single system for making decisions on office closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal decisions.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2009

If Hazardous Conditions Develop During Normal Business Hours (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)

If hazardous weather begins during normal working hours, the State Conservationist and Center Directors or their acting will confer to decide on early dismissal or office closing. The Director, National Water and Climate Center or the acting Director will provide advice on the weather forecast and potential for increasing hazardous weather. The attached appendix provides information for the agency heads on procedural information for closing offices. Decisions on office closing or early dismissal will be announced directly to agency staffs. Prior to a decision of early dismissal or office closing, if employees feel the conditions for their drive home are too hazardous for them to stay at work, they may request annual or credit leave from their supervisor following normal procedures to leave early.

If Hazardous Conditions Develop During Non-Business Hours (4:00 pm – 7:30 am)

If weather conditions become hazardous during non-business hours, the State Conservationist and Center Directors or their acting will consult with one another to determine if the offices located in the 1201 Lloyd Building will be closed or if there will be a delayed office opening. This decision will be made prior to 6:00 am if possible. If the office is closed or if a delayed opening is in effect the NRCS Oregon State Administrative Officer will send a voicemail message using the USDA Group Distribution and also place a message on the NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline (1-866-856-1920 ext.8). Check your office phone first for messages. If you can't get through to your voicemail, call the Emergency Hotline. Note that the Hotline connects to a field office in Eastern Oregon and you must make the appropriate menu selection to hear the Emergency Hotline message.

The standard policy will be that if the roads are passable, the 1201 Lloyd Building NRCS offices will be open; however, supervisors will apply a liberal leave policy when an employee feels that road conditions are too hazardous to chance a commute to the office. The decision to close the 1201 Lloyd offices will most likely only be made if conditions in the Portland Metropolitan area are so extreme that law enforcement agencies are urging that everyone stay off the roads and mass transit is shut down. The Portland Metropolitan area is defined as the area consisting of Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah counties.

As stated above, during periods of hazardous weather, liberal leave procedures will be in effect. When liberal leave is in effect, an employee's use of annual or credit leave is assumed to be approved by the supervisor based on an employee's desire not to travel in hazardous weather conditions. However, the supervisor must be notified as soon as possible of the decision to take leave, and it cannot be granted for more than one day (8 hours) at a time.

How to Code Your Time

If the decision to close or delay opening the office is made prior to the start of the workday, according to the NRCS General Manual, employees will be granted administrative leave for the entire day, even if conditions improve and even if they are on scheduled leave. In this case, your normal workday hours should be coded as Other Leave – Admin in the WebTCAS system. If the office is closed during the course of the day and employees are dismissed early, the portion of your normal workday hours that you were absent should be coded as working hours and you should note in the comments the time period that was "excused absence due to early dismissal." Otherwise, your time absent should be coded as annual, credit, or comp leave.

The primary notification mechanisms for office closures are your office phone voice mail and the NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline (1-866-856-1920 ext.8). All employees should provide their current home telephone numbers to their supervisor but don't depend on your supervisor calling you.

//signed//
BOB GRAHAM
State Conservationist

//signed//
BRUCE NEWTON
Director, West National
Technology Support Center

//signed//
JAMIE GILLUM
Director, West
Remote Sensing
Laboratory

//s// Mike Strobel
MICHAEL STROBEL
Director, National
Water and Climate Center

Appendix
DIST: E, NWCC, WNTSC, WRSL, OCIO/ITS, RD SO

Enclosure

cc via website:

<http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/bulletins/bulletins07-08.html>
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